

# Memorandum

**TO:** ARTS COMMISSION**FROM:** Kerry Adams Hapner**SUBJECT:** Children's Discovery Museum  
Expansion**DATE:** August 27, 2014

Approved

Date

Aug. 26, 2014

## RECOMMENDATION

Review and endorse Children's Discovery Museum's proposed expansion of its garden area to allow expanded environmental programming and provide space for an exhibit fabrication structure.

## BACKGROUND

Housed in a 52,000 square foot iconic purple building designed by world-renowned architect, Ricardo Legoretta, and adjacent to the Guadalupe River Park, the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) serves more than 325,000 visitors annually. Through its *Open Door Policy*, CDM provides free or reduced admission to more than 50,000 low-income families and schools every year.

CDM is a regional cultural attraction that has received national recognition for its high quality programming. Among its accolades is the *National Medal for Museum Service*, the highest federal honor a museum can receive. Cited in this award were such offerings as *BioSITE* (Students Investigating Their Environment), a program which includes elementary, middle and high school students in semester-long courses using the Guadalupe River as an outdoor classroom, and *Kids' Garden*, a small outdoor space where kids help plant, water and harvest fruits, vegetables and herbs. In addition, CDM is ranked in the *Top Ten Children's Museums* nationally by *Child Magazine* and is an acknowledged leader in the design, development and fabrication of highly interactive educational exhibits.

The City of San Jose owns the building; CDM operates and maintains it. In 2008, CDM completed a Master Plan in partnership with the San Jose Redevelopment Agency (RDA). In addition to replacement of end-of-life infrastructure and facility improvements, it also outlined a 16,000 square foot building expansion at the southern end of the site and CDM's occupancy of 30,000 square foot of land on the eastern side of the facility. The RDA had budgeted to fund a portion of the project costs, however, following the closing of the RDA, funding for implementing the Master Plan was no longer viable. CDM has identified clusters of projects in priority order so that it could raise funds from the community and complete them.

## ANALYSIS

For nearly two years, CDM staff has been working to craft a plan that would address critical space issues for environmental education and exhibit. This planned expansion will add approx 12,000 sq. ft. to the current *Kid's Garden* area. The expanded garden area will provide an opportunity for visitors to gain hands-on experience in gardening, environmental stewardship, water conservation and sustainable food production. It will contain raised and vertical growing beds, native and drought-tolerant demonstration gardens and a water catchment system (cisterns).

The centerpiece of the garden will be the *Tree of 40 Fruit*, a living artwork by artist Sam Van Aken. Originally commissioned in 2013 by the San Jose Museum of Art for its *Around Our Table* exhibition, *The Tree of 40 Fruit* is one of a limited series of hybridized fruit trees grafted with multiple types of stone fruit including plums, apricots, nectarines and cherries. Several of the varieties are drawn from species native to Santa Clara Valley. The *Tree of 40 Fruit* are a form of conservation, preserving heirloom stone fruit varieties that are no commercially produced or available. CDM's garden is also one of the sites under consideration for a City-sponsored public art project showcasing conservation, in a partnership with the Environmental Services Department.

The expansion will also provide a place for a 3,200 sq. ft. stand-alone structure, *The Builder Building*, that will serve as an exhibit fabrication and repair area to ensure that the museum's exhibits are refreshed and maintained continually to support the healthy cognitive, physical and social development of those who visit the museum. The structure will incorporate a child-friendly window for visitors to watch the exhibit builders as they work so that they can see first-hand how exhibits are built.

The planned expansion will require amendment of the Guadalupe River Park master plan to accommodate the proposed expansion. In addition, it will require City Council approval of an amendment to CDM's operation and maintenance (O&M) agreement to incorporate the area of expansion and conclude that that the expansion into the public park would benefit the community and enhance the recreational purposes of the public park. The proposed project appears to meet all the conditions per City policy in regards to enhance the outdoor space at Discovery Meadows through the garden expansion. CDM has a program available to ensure affordable access.

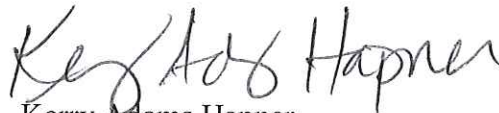
The expansion plans for the project have been submitted and are being reviewed by the City. Unless there are significant delays due to unanticipated issues, CDM plans to complete the project by June 2015 in time to mark its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

All of the funds needed to construct the expanded garden and *The Builder Building* have been raised, and key partnerships for major in-kind support secured. No funding is being requested from the City of San Jose for this expansion.

While the Arts Commission does not have direct jurisdiction over this expansion, an endorsement of the project will signal support when the expansion goes to City Council for required actions which include a revision to City's O&M agreement with CDM to incorporate this expansion.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

As part of the authorization process, a public meeting to gather feedback on the proposed expansion is scheduled for September 2, 2014, and the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled to hear this item at its meeting on September 3, 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry Adams Hapner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Kerry Adams Hapner  
Director of Cultural Affairs

Attachments:

- A. CDM Expansion Overview
- B. CDM Expansion Rendering



**Project Goals:**

- ➔ To provide our annual audience of 325,000 children and adults visitors to gain hands-on exposure and learn about:
  - Environmental stewardship;
  - Water conservation and drought education; and
  - Sustainable food production through raised bed and vertical gardening.
- ➔ To expand our capacity for exhibit fabrication and repair to ensure that our exhibits are refreshed and maintained continually to support the healthy cognitive, physical and social development of our community's children.

**Phase I: Expanded *Kids' Garden* and *The Builder Building* (completed by 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary: June, 2015)**
**Project Components:**
**1. *Kids' Garden*:** 12,000 square foot expansion to include:

- New raised and vertical growing beds to: 1) engage children in planting, stewarding and harvesting so that they learn where food comes from, and 2) involve children in growing fresh foods to be served in our cafe;
- Native and drought-tolerant demonstration gardens that role-model for the community practical ways to reduce water consumption while maintaining a green environment;
- Water catchment system (cisterns) and interactive exhibit to demonstrate how the process works;
- Storm drain Rain Garden to demonstrate how strategic planting can reduce run-off to storm drains; and
- The Tree of 40 Fruit, designed by Sam Van Aken and originally commissioned by the Museum of Art, that will be a centerpiece of the space, an opportunity for in-depth programming, and a showcase for the intersection of science and art.

**2. *The Builder Building*:** 3,200sf stand-alone structure for exhibit fabrication

- Enables CDM to build new exhibits without closing current exhibition space to the public;
- Redeploys existing fabrication shop to "clean production", such as graphics and signage, greatly reducing production costs and increasing flexibility; and
- Offers a "Sneak-Peak" window for visitors to see our exhibit builders in action, understand how our exhibits are designed and built, and be inspired to learn wood-working, metal-crafting, and design.

**Project Partners:**

<u>Design and Construction:</u>	<u>In-Kind Materials:</u>	<u>Educational Programming:</u>
Brad Cox Architect, Inc.* Callander Associates Landscape Architecture* Devcon Construction* City of San Jose Public Works Department *Contributing 30+% of fees	Sunpower - <i>Solar panels</i> San Jose Conservation Corps - <i>Rain catchment system</i> - <i>Rain garden infrastructure</i>	Open Space Authority Guadalupe River Park Conservancy

**Phase II: Nature Education Center (anticipated completion by 2017)**
**Project Components:**

- 20,000sf interactive ***Nature Education Center*** developed in collaboration with the Open Space Authority on the northern portion of the eastern site adjacent to the expanded garden (parcel tax on November, 2014 ballot)

**Process to Advance Project**

Amendment of the Guadalupe River Park Master Plan to incorporate Phases I and II using the following process:

- Public Meeting on Proposed Expansion: September 2, 2014, 5:30-7:00pm at Children's Discovery Museum;
- Parks Commission Public Meeting: September 3, 2014, 5:30pm at City Hall
- Arts Commission Public Meeting: September 10, 2014, 5:30pm at City Hall
- Amendment to Children's Discovery Museum's Operations and Maintenance Agreement to address responsibilities for new facilities by September 15, 2014
- City Council approval – later September, 2014

# Phase I

